

(Washington, DC) -

U.S. Rep. Debbie Halvorson issued the following statement after Illinois manufacturer Caterpillar announced it must cut 20,000 jobs because of the economic environment:

"Today's devastating news that a major manufacturer and employer in Illinois is cutting 20,000 jobs is further evidence we need to move immediately to fix our economy. Even before Caterpillar's announcement that it would need to eliminate 5,000 more positions than it had previously planned, we learned Illinois' jobless rate is at a 15-year high.

"Each lost job represents a family that is going through a very difficult situation. Health insurance becomes more difficult to maintain. College costs become even more overwhelming.

"It is clear we must act decisively and on a scale that will save jobs, create new jobs, and grow our economy. We can begin economic recovery by passing a stimulus bill that will immediately put people to work, create a new energy economy, and invest in our communities.

"Congress must pass a comprehensive piece of legislation to invest in clean, efficient American energy, transform our economy through research and technology upgrades, modernize our deteriorating infrastructure, and open doors for our children through added investments in education.

"We must also address the needs of families who are experiencing unemployment. Families receiving health care under COBRA are experiencing a doubling or worse of their monthly payments without a job to cover the costs. State governments are buckling under the additional Medicaid and unemployment insurance costs, and this must also be addressed.

"We are facing the most challenging economy in generations. It is not enough to stand on the sidelines and hope that the economy will right itself. We must make critical investments to create jobs and grow our economy, and we must act immediately."

